

T.J. Adams - 5 Years Old

Wickliffe, Kentucky
Mauled to death by wolf hybrid

Associated Press

June 12, 2002

Benton Boy Dies After Dog Mauling

WICKLIFFE, Kentucky – A 5-year-old boy was mauled to death by a male wolf-mix chained in the yard next door to his grandmother's house. T.J. Adams of Benton was attacked Friday. He was taken first to Lourdes Hospital in Paducah for surgery and then to Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville, where he died late Sunday. The dog was owned by Latasha Laster, the neighbor of his grandmother, Betty Owen of Wickliffe. Laster, 21, was cited on a misdemeanor charge of harboring a vicious animal.

<https://www.unchainyourdog.org/news/Benton.htm>

T.J. Adams - killed by wolf Hybrid - June 2002

T.J. Adams died late last night at Kosair Children's hospital in Louisville. Authorities say a wolf-hybrid type dog attacked the boy Friday afternoon. Adams lives in Benton, Kentucky, but he was visiting his grandmother in Wickliffe when he was attacked.

Relatives say he often spent weekends at the Ballard County home. The Ballard County Sheriff's department is still trying to figure out exactly where the attack took place. They report having complaints about the dogs that lived at 918 Beechgrove Road, but no charges were ever filed against the owners.

T.J.'s relatives said he had a fear of large aggressive dogs.

"He didn't like a dog that was aggressive," said T.J.'s Grandmother, Betty Owen. "If the dog walked up to him he would pet it, but if it got active it was scared of it."

The dog's owner, Latasha Laster, 21, pleaded not guilty Monday morning to charges of harboring a vicious animal. County Attorney Michael Stacy wouldn't say whether further charges might be filed.

<https://onyourownadventures.com/hunttalk/showthread.php?230723-Wolf-dogs-kill-local-women>

The Paducha Sun

Dog Owner Pleads Guilty In Boys Death

WICKLIFFE, Ky.--Latasha Laster, who was set to stand trial Monday on manslaughter charges in connection with the mauling of T.J. Adams, accepted a plea bargain from prosecutors Tuesday.

Laster, of Wickliffe, pleaded guilty to reckless homicide in Ballard Circuit Court before Judge Will Shadoan. Commonwealth Attorney Tim Langford recommended a two-year prison term. Shadoan will sentence Laster at 9:30 a.m. March 5.

Langford recommended the charge of second-degree manslaughter be changed to reckless homicide, and the charges of wanton endangerment and harboring a vicious animal be dismissed.

Adams, 5, of Benton was attacked June 7, 2002, by a 70-pound dog belonging to Laster that was chained in a yard behind his grandparents' home on Beech Grove Road. He died two days later at Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville.

The dog was destroyed.

"The victim's family, his mother and grandmother, were in agreement with the plea offer," Langford said. "I'm pleased the defendant stepped up and took responsibility for her actions. I hope this brings a form of closure for the victim's family. I'm also pleased we're not required to open old wounds in the trial. Time heals some things, but T.J. will always be missed."

Laster's attorney, Gorman "Butch" Bradley of Paducah, declined comment until after the sentencing. Laster, who begins classes today at West Kentucky Community and Technical College, remained out of jail on bond. She paid 10 percent of her \$15,000 bond in 2002.

"Wolf Hybrid" Kills Child 06/02

A Ballard County woman whose dog fatally attacked a 5-year-old boy in June 2002 has pleaded guilty to a felony count of reckless homicide. Ballard Commonwealth's Attorney Tim Langford said the plea agreement reached this week calls for a two-year prison term for Latasha Laster. Laster, 22, will be sentenced March 5.

Laster's attorney, Gorman D. Bradley of Paducah, said his client was "very remorseful" about the attack, but added that she would seek probation. He said Laster, who remains free on bond, wanted to get the incident behind her and resume taking college classes.

The dog, described by authorities as a wolf hybrid, mauled T.J. Adams of Benton, who was visiting his grandmother next to Laster's home in Wickliffe. The boy died of his injuries at Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville. Laster's defense disputed the dog's pedigree.

Witnesses said the dog, which was attached to a long chain at the time, attacked the boy in his grandmother's yard and then dragged him into Laster's yard. A Ballard County grand jury indicted Laster on charges of harboring a vicious animal, wanton endangerment and second-degree manslaughter. Langford said the first two charges were dismissed and the manslaughter charge was amended to reckless homicide. He said the boy's family agreed to the plea bargain.

Police shot the 70-pound dog after the attack.

Langford said a prosecution witness was prepared to testify based on a tissue analysis that the dog was a wolf hybrid, a breed of dog that has been blamed for dozens of attacks...

<https://onyourownadventures.com/hunttalk/showthread.php?230723-Wolf-dogs-kill-local-women>

The Associated Press

March 6, 2004

Woman to Hang Dead Child's Photo in Cell

WICKLIFFE, Ky. - A woman whose dog mauled a 5-year-old boy to death was ordered to serve six months in jail with a picture of the child on her cell wall.

The 8-by-11-inch photograph of T.J. Adams was taken when he was hospitalized after the attack in June 2002.

Latasha Laster, 23, will serve the sentence around her work and college schedule and must perform 300 hours of community service, Judge Will Shadoan ruled Friday.

"She's done a very stupid thing," Shadoan said. "It cost a little boy his life."

Laster pleaded guilty to reckless homicide.

T.J. was visiting his grandmother next door to Laster's home in Wickliffe, in western Kentucky, when he was attacked. He died two days later.

Investigators said the 70-pound wolf hybrid was on a 20-foot chain, which allowed the dog to cross into the grandmother's property and attack the child.

Authorities shot the animal after the attack.